

HIGHER EDUCATION BEHAVIOURS CHARTER - PROTECT OUR GAME

2026-27 SEASON



AGENDA



Welcome and Introductions

The Importance of Club Culture

BUCS Rugby Union

The Higher Education Behaviours Charter - Protect our Game

BUCS Discipline Processes

Signposting the Discipline Processes Across All Home Nation Unions

Behaviour Charter Toolkit

Q&As

WHY DOES CULTURE MATTER?



OWEN SLOT

How universities are trying to stop initiations that turn students off sport

Mandatory training and behaviour charters have been introduced to tackle the scourge of drinking games and obscene forfeits that are forcing youngsters away from teams

Owen Slot, Chief Sports Writer

Friday September 18 2026, 12.20pm, The Times



BRITISH UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES SPORT
20-24 KING'S BENCH STREET
LONDON SE1 0DX

RUGBY UNION CULTURE AND CONDUCT THE HIGHER EDUCATION BEHAVIOURS CHARTER - PROTECT OUR GAME

Dear Higher Education Colleagues,

As we approach the 2026-27 academic season, and with students returning to university rugby union, we are once again writing to communicate our shared expectations for standards of behaviour across the game, both on and off the pitch. Significantly, we are now entering the fourth year of embedding our Higher Education Behaviours Charter throughout our communities to ensure we continue to contribute to making rugby union a safe and inclusive sport for all, and that each of us is responsible for protecting our game.

Thank you to our members for your ongoing support and engagement with the Charter over the past three years. We recognise the progress being made across our sport, and particularly within the university game, as a result of institutions engaging with the processes and taking proactive steps to address issues within their own environments. We greatly appreciate your continued efforts and commitment to the collective work we are undertaking to create positive change across the game.

Across the sector there is still much work to do. The Higher Education Behaviours Charter has and continues to be at the forefront of this work. As our community feels more comfortable in identifying and reporting behavioural challenges they may face, we must stay vigilant in our approach and continue to reinforce the responsibility of our members to challenge and eradicate unacceptable behaviour.

At the BUCS Club Culture Summit in June 2026, moving testimony was provided by a student whose initial university experiences were ruined by the bullying behaviours of older Rugby Union club members relating to alcohol and wider physical and emotional abuse. This led to this student leaving the sport entirely. In parallel, BUCS research conducted in Spring 2026 highlighted that some students choose not to play university sport at all due to the reputation for initiations and social activities year-round. We, as

- Culture can influence participation
- Wider focus across the whole Higher Education sector – BUCS Club Culture Summit
- Positive club culture is a shared responsibility

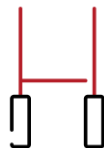


BUCS RUGBY UNION 2026-27

THIS IS ABOUT ALL OF US – AT EVERY LEVEL



374 Teams
(250 Men)
(124 Women)



2153 fixtures
League & Knockout



107 institutions / clubs



2025-26 Impact
Report



Conference Finals
Tiers 2 and below
10th March



BUCS Big Wednesday
National Vase and
National Trophy Finals
Loughborough
24th March



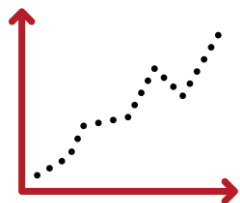
BUCS Super Rugby
Milk Championship Finals
Women's 17th March
Men's 21st April

BUCS



WHY ARE WE HERE

FOR OUR INSTITUTIONS, OUR STAFF, OUR PLAYERS AND OUR SPECTATORS



To recognise that behavioural challenges exist across Higher Education rugby union



To share good practice from our clubs and guide positive change



To highlight the resources that may help contribute to making a safe and inclusive environment



To increase awareness of how to report



To give guidance on sanctions and disciplinary outcomes

A UNITED STAND



OUR PRINCIPLES



The purpose of the *Higher Education Behaviours Charter - Protect our Game* sits across four core principles:

- 1.To ensure our Higher Education Rugby Union environments, and standards of behaviour both on and off the field are as safe and inclusive as possible for all.
- 2.To raise awareness of how to identify examples of poor behaviour when they occur.
- 3.To create a safe and confidential reporting mechanism for all, in order to ensure we proactively investigate and where necessary, sanction such incidents resulting in swift and resolute action
4. To follow the [World Rugby values](#)

THE BEHAVIOURS CHARTER

Institution

Staff

Player

Spectator

BUCS



INSTITUTION

As a BUCS-affiliated institution, we understand the importance of making rugby union a positive and inclusive environment and that we are responsible for the behaviours and actions of our students and spectators. To support this, we aspire to;

- Make our culture as open and inclusive as possible
- Abide by the spirit and values of the game of rugby union
- Hold ourselves accountable for our actions and of those representing our club
- Call out instances of our own spectators', staff and players' poor behaviour
- Actively and in good time, report instances of poor behaviour at matches through the appropriate channels with honesty and transparency
- Not engage in disrespectful or negative activity nor display signs or banners which use inflammatory, discriminatory or inappropriate language
- Ensure our social media channels and posts reflect positive rugby values and content will refrain from being disrespectful, negative or inflammatory

STAFF

As a member of staff at a BUCS affiliated institution who cares deeply about the sport and who wants to uphold the values of rugby union, I aspire to;

- Be an exemplar of the principles of fair play and the values and laws of the game
- Show courtesy, consideration, kindness and respect to players, the opposition, match officials and spectators when playing home and away
- Be mindful of creating and maintaining an inclusive environment
- Be an active listener
- Challenge all instances of negative behaviour
- To treat all colleagues, partners and external staff of our stakeholders with empathy and respect whilst in our rugby union environment.

PLAYER

As a player who loves the game, I aspire to;

- Show courtesy, consideration, kindness and respect for my teammates, the opposition, match officials and visitors when playing home and away
- Treat all my teammates equally and respect other teammates' rights
- Uphold the principles of fair play and the Laws of the Game
- Be open to talk to others about what makes them different and unique
- Be positive in every contribution I make in the club
- Make sure that all team members are included in club activities
- Recognise that banter (teasing/joking talk) can become bullying behaviour. If a teammate asks me to stop, I will
- Challenge negative language and behaviours (e.g., racist, disablist, homophobic)
- Intervene safely, not confrontationally
- Report any anti-social behaviour to the club officials
- Accept victory and defeat, success and failure with dignity

SPECTATOR

Crowds play a huge role creating an atmosphere which motivates and inspires the players on the pitch and a positive crowd, behaving appropriately, can make a match truly memorable.

As a spectator who wants to contribute positively to this vision and experience, I aspire to;

- Always be respectful towards all players and coaching staff
- Be respectful towards my fellow supporters, both from my team and the opposition
- Remain outside the field of play and to not confront players or a match official at any time
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behaviour
- Report any anti-social behaviour to the stewards on duty, associated institutions and relevant governing body where necessary
- Be mindful of the image and reputation of rugby and support its values and inclusivity
- Be an active listener
- Hold myself and my peers to account

OUR RESOURCES

BUCS

Behaviour-based dedicated
webpage

All contacts made available

Digital assets made available

Reporting function

Details of decision-making
processes

Behaviours Charter
Toolkit



[Competitions](#) [Events](#) [Get Involved](#) [Workforce](#) [News](#) [Tickets](#) [Login](#) [Q](#)

BEHAVIOURS CHARTER

REPORT A BEHAVIOUR ISSUE

Experienced a problem behaviour issue or heard about one? Report and share, so we can take action.

TELL US THE ISSUE



Becca Stone
Rugby Union
Programme
Coordinator



BUCS PLAY
Join, enter or follow University
Rugby Union on BUCS Play

DOWNLOAD NOW

Rugby Union Behaviours Charter

Throughout the 2022-23 season, there were a number of incidents that occurred within our rugby union programme that has led to accelerated conversations between BUCS and our associated NGBs as to how we best approach the issue of behaviour.

The outcome has been to provide a collective stance on addressing the issues we are facing in the game, alongside creating practical solutions, education and resources to both enable and promote positive game day experiences for all stakeholders associated to BUCS rugby union.

Below you will find relevant information, documents, and links to important resources around the **Higher Education Behaviours Charter - Protect our Game initiative**.

As the season unfolds, we will add more resources to this page to assist with creating more positive and inclusive environments for our BUCS rugby union communities and a safer place to report incidents that contravene the principles of our charter.

Behaviours Charter Resources

BUCS Rugby Union Behaviours Charter 2026-27 1.01MB	DOWNLOAD
Rugby Union Higher Education Behaviours Charter - Protect Our Game 2026-27 1.97MB	DOWNLOAD
BUCS Rugby Union Culture and Conduct letter 2026-27 0.50MB	DOWNLOAD

Behaviour Charter Toolkit

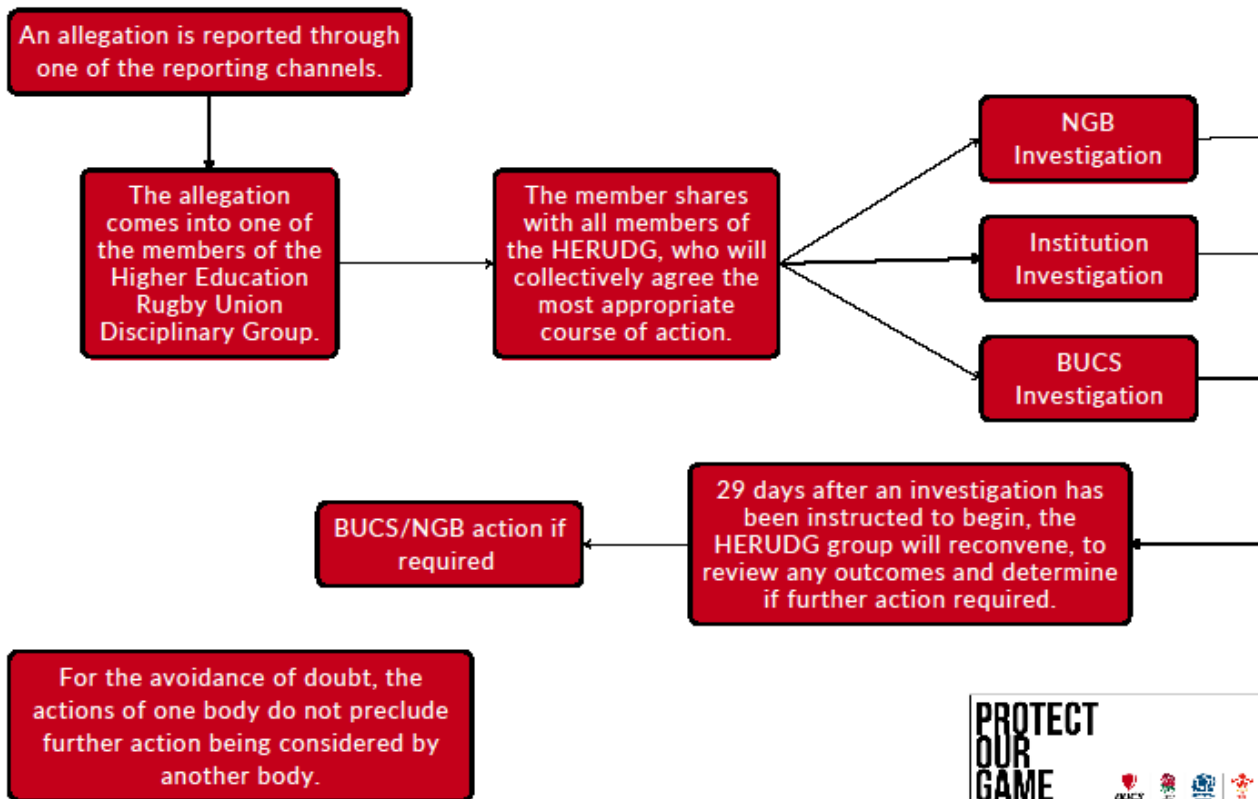
The purpose of this toolkit is to support institutions in managing behaviour effectively and ensuring adherence to the Behaviours Charter 2025-26. It is designed for use by university staff and committee members across all levels.

HOW CAN A REPORT BE MADE AND WHERE CAN IT GO?

- Disciplinary matters can be reported to BUCS, the RFU (and SRFU), SRU and WRU
 - HERUDG
- On-field disciplinary issues will be dealt with through the relevant Home Union processes and reporting mechanisms
- Misconduct issues can be dealt with by BUCS and/or the relevant Home Union



Reporting Process



BUCS

WILL SPENDLOVE – SPORT COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR
DISCIPLINE@BUCS.ORG.UK

BUCS: GENERAL REGULATIONS – BUCS: REGULATION 5 – MISCONDUCT
BUCS: SPORT SPECIFIC REGULATIONS – RUGBY UNION REGULATIONS



BUCS



MISCONDUCT (REG 5)

•**REG 5.1** Each BUCS Member Institution/Playing Entity shall be responsible for ensuring that its student-athletes, officials, employees, representatives and anyone reasonably believed to be its supporters or followers attending or taking part in any BUCS Competition, BUCS Competition Event(s) and BUCS Organised Activity do not:

- REG 5.1.1** behave in a way which is improper, offensive, violent, threatening, abusive, indecent, insulting or inflammatory;
- REG 5.1.2** conduct themselves in a manner prohibited by REG 5.1.1 in circumstances where that conduct is discriminatory in that it includes a reference, whether express or implied, to any one or more of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010;
- REG 5.1.3** throw missiles or other potentially harmful or dangerous objects at or on to the field of play;
- REG 5.1.4** in the case of anyone reasonably believed to be its supporters or followers, or other unauthorised persons, encroach on to the field of play or commit any form of field of play incursion, save for reasons of safety;
- REG 5.1.5** disregard the requests/instructions of Tournament Directors or appointed officials;
- REG 5.1.6** enter or attempt to enter the venue while in possession of recreational drugs;
- REG 5.1.7** enter or attempt to enter the venue while in possession of a flare, smoke bomb or firework;
- REG 5.1.8** in the case of student-athletes, consume alcohol or recreational drugs (in addition to substances covered under REG 4.4).

•**REG 5.2** For the purpose of REG 5.1, BUCS Organised Activity includes but is not limited to any conferences, events, meetings and residentials organised by BUCS.

CHARGES UNDER REG 5

COMPLAINTS AND CHARGES

- To lodge a Misconduct Complaint against a BUCS Member institution/Playing Entity for a breach of REG 5, individuals must follow the process outlined in the BUCS Misconduct Complaints Policy and Procedure ([Appendix 20](#)). All Misconduct Complaints will be managed in line with the process outlined in the BUCS Misconduct Complaints Policy and Procedure ([Appendix 20](#)).
- Where it is deemed that there is a case to be answered following a complaint investigation and a subsequent charge of misconduct is raised, BUCS shall convene a disciplinary panel to hear the case. This shall be conducted in line with BUCS Misconduct Disciplinary Policy and Procedure ([Appendix 21](#)).

WHO IS THE CHARGE AGAINST?

- The charge is against the institution, as the institution is the BUCS member and responsible for the actions of their representatives.
- If a sanction is imposed, it will be imposed against the institution, but this can be at a club or team level, for example a points deduction or ban from competition.

CHARGES UNDER REG 5

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- The institution the charge is against will have a chance to respond, providing any supporting evidence they may have.
- The matter will then be heard by a BUCS Judiciary Panel, consisting of an independent Chair and two students/Sabbatical Officers of BUCS member institutions. All parties will have the opportunity to attend.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL OUTCOMES?

- Potential outcomes are outlined in [Appendix 11 \(BUCS Sanction Policy for Members\)](#) of the BUCS Rules and Regulations. The Panel can however exercise discretion regarding these sanctions and will always consider the specific circumstances of the case, including efforts and measures taken by the member both following an incident and prior to it.
- The decision(s) reached, and any sanction(s) applied are communicated verbally immediately following the conclusion of the hearing and subsequently emailed out to all parties.

ENGLAND RUGBY

Inclusive for All

Diverse across the game

A fun experience



Katy Young
University Partnerships Manager
RFU



WHAT WE ASK OF YOU

- Tell someone if something's not right
- We expect clubs/institutions to be proactive and compliant with constituent bodies (Student's Rugby Football Unions and/or local geographical CBs) if applicable.
- The full process is available at RFU Regulation 19 – take a look alongside the BUCS regulations
- Please ensure that you GMS golden roles are up to date.

NOTE: Under RFU regulation 19.2.18 (b) the RFU discipline team will be managing the disciplinary process of Men's and Women's BSR and associated playoffs for both leagues



BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER: WHEN SOMETHING HAPPENS THAT'S NOT RIGHT, **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**



DIRECT

RESPECTFULLY INTERVENES
TO CHALLENGE BEHAVIOUR



DELAY

WAITS UNTIL THE TIME IS
RIGHT TO OFFER SUPPORT



DISTRACT

INTERRUPTS BEHAVIOUR
BY INFLUENCING A
CHANGE IN TOPIC



DELEGATE

SEEKS SUPPORT FROM
SOMEONE WHO IS BETTER
EQUIPPED TO HELP

SPEAKUP@RFU.COM

LINKS & PROCESSES

Complaints Form - [click here](#)

Email: speakup@rfu.com

Confidential Telephone: 02088317883

[General Disciplinary Information](#)

[Inclusion and Diversity Action Plan](#)

[Sexism & Misogyny Policy & Toolkit](#)

[Club Membership Issue Policy](#)

[Referee Concern Reporting](#)





**SCOTTISH
RUGBY**

The Discipline Process

Overview



In BUCS, if a player is sent off or otherwise the subject of a Discipline case, it is referred to the Home Union of the player's team.



All disciplinary cases are adjudicated on by an independent disciplinary committee made up of a legally qualified chair and two other panel members with appropriate rugby experience. They are all volunteers who do it for the love of the game.



We deal with over 200 cases a year at all levels relating to:



Red
cards



Cittings



Misconduct

The procedures are all available to view on the SRU website and include:



Discipline Rules &
Regulations



Code of
Conduct



Guide to Discipline
Hearings

<https://scottishrugby.org/rules-and-regulations/discipline/disciplinary-procedures/>

Misconduct



Scottish Rugby supports the Behaviour Charter and will investigate and where necessary prosecute misconduct complaints in the best interests of the game.

Scottish Rugby operates a confidential reporting resource '[Tell Us](#)' created to encourage participants to raise concerns or share negative experiences relating to incidents of discrimination or other misconduct in rugby contexts.

We have prosecuted misconduct cases for offences including:

- Referee abuse
- Racial, homophobic and misogynistic abuse
- Bullying
- Sexual Harassment
- Abuse during initiation ceremonies
- Abuse through social media

SANCTIONS

Discipline Panels have broad scope in sanctioning, including the use of education-based sanctions, e.g. requiring individuals and/or institutions to attend training courses. These have recently included Diversity & Inclusion, the Bystander Approach and Show Racism the Red Card.

MATCH OFFICIAL ABUSE

Scottish Rugby takes a strong stance on Referee Abuse. If a referee declares the abuse to be 'red card equivalent', the case will proceed straight to the disciplinary process. Referee Abuse will always attract an enhanced sanction

Recent Trends

- Red Cards
 - Increase in number of red cards for high tackles/head contact reflecting focus on this area
 - Increase in number of red cards for referee abuse/dissent.
 - Increase in number of red cards in the Women's game reflecting an upsurge in participation in Women's Rugby.
- Misconduct
 - Increase in complaints regarding misogyny, sexual harassment and other such inappropriate conduct towards women.

A Positive Approach

Robust processes are in place to deal with offenders but prevention always better than cure. To this end:

- The Scottish Rugby Coaching courses all promote and support coaches in building a positive culture and promoting positive behaviours
- Scottish Rugby's 2024-2028 Strategy will create opportunities for us to strengthen/re-establish our core values and behaviours
- The Scottish Rugby [Everyone's Game](#) initiative continues to promote, support and encourage clubs to be open, welcoming and inclusive spaces within their communities.

Institutions can help themselves by following the Behaviour Charter and:

- Being open and inclusive to all;
- Being accountable for the culture of the club and the actions of team members and supporters;
- Reporting instances of poor conduct and not 'closing ranks';
- Ensuring that the 'public face' reflects positive rugby values

Welsh Rugby Union Integrity, Regulatory and Competitions Dept

Discipline and Anti Doping Lead Mandi Venn
Mvenn@wru.wales

Senior Coordinator Roisin Moses Rmoses@wru.wales
Disciplinarydept@wru.wales





- 4473 Games were played within the Welsh Community last season 2025/26
- We dealt with 775 Discipline Cases
- Which includes Red Cards, Code of Conducts, Citings, Interim Suspension orders and Appeals

In BUCS, if a player is sent off or otherwise the subject of a Discipline case, it is referred to the Home Union of the player's team.

- Our Process and Procedures are available on our Website
- <https://wru2023.wru.soticclient.net/community-rugby/integrity/discipline/>

- Welsh Rugby has adopted the World Rugby Regulations within its own Disciplinary Rules. These Disciplinary Rules support our objective of ensuring that justice is obtained through our disciplinary proceedings, and that decisions are made in a fair, consistent, independent and timely manner.

- <https://defr2m2jfy429.cloudfront.net/wru-2023/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/27114656/Senior-Disciplinary-Regulations-2025-2026.pdf>





The WRU's Discipline Department directly deals with foul play and misconduct cases from U16s and above in the Boy's and Men's Game and U18's and above in the Women's game.

- The WRU have a Code of Conduct which relate to:
 - (a) Players.
 - (b) coaches, team managers and Club officials
 - (c) match officials.
 - (d) referee advisers.
 - (e) spectators; and
 - (f) social media and communications.
- <https://defr2m2jfy429.cloudfront.net/wru2023/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/27114928/Senior-Codes-of-Conduct-2025-2026.pdf>



- The Disciplinary Panel will consider cases in which a Player is cited for an act of Foul Play.
- A citing may be initiated by any of the following, where there is an allegation that a Player committed an act of foul play but was not awarded a red card for that act:
 - (a) a Club involved in the relevant match;
 - (b) a member of the Board of Directors and/or WRU Council;
 - (c) The WRU Disciplinary Officer

<https://defr2m2jfy429.cloudfront.net/wru2023/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/01142805/2.-Appendix-2-Citing-Procedures.pdf>

Whilst the *Disciplinary Rules* are approved by the WRU they are administered independently on the game's behalf by a panel of legally qualified and other suitably experienced Discipline Panel members.

The Welsh Rugby Union Disciplinary Panel comprises three independent members to deal with all aspects of the Union's Disciplinary Regulations in relation to senior players playing in the Union's domestic competitions below Regional rugby, including the SRC, WRU National Leagues, WRU Knock Out Competitions, as well as pre-season friendlies and Women's rugby.





DIOLCH YN FAWR

THIS IS OUR GAME, THIS IS WELSH RUGBY

DYMA'N GÊM NI, DYMA RYGBI CYMREIG

- [WRU Judicial Process](#)
- <https://defr2m2jfy429.cloudfront.net/wru2023/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/01142637/Judicial-Process.pdf>

BEHAVIOUR CHARTER TOOLKIT

BEHAVIOUR CHARTER TOOLKIT

**PROTECT
OUR
GAME**



The purpose of this toolkit is to support institutions in managing behaviour effectively and ensuring adherence to the Behaviour Charter. It is designed for use by university staff and committee members across all levels. Resources were added for committee members

RESOURCES FOR STAFF

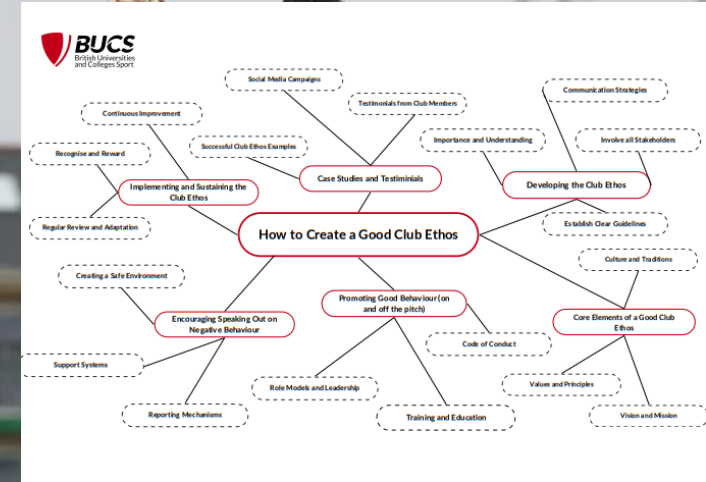
1. **Controlling Spectator Behaviour:** Guidance on best practices for maintaining a positive and respectful environment during events. There is also a lite version.
2. **Top Tips for Internal Investigations:** Practical advice for conducting thorough and fair investigations when BUCS or your NGB asks. There is also a lite version.
3. **Reporting Flowchart:** A visual guide to the reporting process from report to result.

Top Tips for Internal Investigations

- ESTABLISH A CLEAR POLICY AND PROCEDURE
- MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY
- ENSURE IMPARTIALITY
- GATHER EVIDENCE SYSTEMATICALLY
- DOCUMENT EVERYTHING
- ENSURE LEGAL COMPLIANCE
- COMMUNICATE TRANSPARENTLY
- PROVIDE SUPPORT
- CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

RESOURCES FOR COMMITTEE

1. **How to Create a Good Club Ethos:** Strategies for fostering a supportive and respectful culture within sports clubs.
2. **What is Good Sportsmanship:** Key principles of sportsmanship and how to promote it within teams and clubs.



Features of “What is Good Sportsmanship?”

1. Core Values
2. Specific Demonstrations
3. Benefits
4. Encouraging Sportsmanship
5. Handling Poor Sportsmanship

RESOURCES FOR BOTH

1. **Additional Resource Library:** A comprehensive collection of resources on behaviour management, sportsmanship, and related topics.
2. **Prepared for Behaviour Checklist:** A checklist to help staff and committee members ensure they are ready to manage behaviour effectively.
3. **Sharing Good Practice:** A form that will allow you to submit practices and behaviours you see. This will allow us to provide recognition to those who are excelling and improving their club culture.

Prepared for Behaviour Checklist

For Institutions

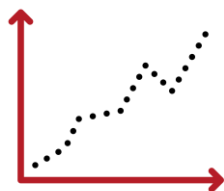
- ☐ Review the Behaviour Charter and Create Code of Conduct
- ☐ Review Controlling Spectators Resource
- ☐ Review Internal Investigation Resource
- ☐ Review Additional Resource Library
- ☐ Attend/Review Behaviour Charter Webinar
- ☐ Ensure Students Esign the Behaviour Charter
- ☐ Create Spectator Behaviour Policy

For Committees

- ☐ Promote Good Sportsmanship
- ☐ Feedback and Continuous Improvement
- ☐ Create a Good Club Ethos
- ☐ Education of all club members

THE 2026-27 SEASON

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN THE 2026-27 SEASON



Greater confidence
in reporting where
necessary



Accessible, relevant
resources for
institutions



Clear and resolute
responses to poor
behaviour



Sharing and
celebrating good
practice



A stronger, safer and
more positive culture

SPORT STAKEHOLDER GROUPS VACANCIES



Sport Advisory Group:

- [Men's Student Representative](#)
- [Women's Performance Representative](#)

BUCS Super Rugby League Management Committees:

- [Men's Premier 1 \(North/South\) Representative](#)
- [Women's Premier North/South Representative](#)
- [Men's Student Representative](#)

Closing Date 25th October

THANK YOU

Questions?

Becca Stone
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